

INTERESTING WATER FACTS

(Compiled by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission)

General Facts:

- There is the same amount of water on Earth as there was when the Earth was formed. The water from your faucet could contain molecules that dinosaurs drank.
- Nearly 97% of the world's water is salty or otherwise undrinkable. Another 2% is locked in ice caps and glaciers. That leaves just 1 % for all of humanity's needs – all its agricultural, residential, manufacturing, community and personal needs.
- Water regulates the Earth's temperature. It also regulates the temperature of the human body, carries nutrients and oxygen to cells, cushions joints, protects organs and tissues, and removes wastes.
- 75% of the human brain is water and 75% of a living tree is water.
- A person can live about a month without food, but only about a week without water.
- The average total home water use for each person in the U. S. is about 50 gallons a day.
- Water expands about 9% when it freezes.
- Water is the only substance found on earth naturally in three forms (liquid, solid, and gaseous).
- Eighty percent of the earth's surface is water – 97% is oceans; 2% is frozen and 1% is suitable for drinking.
- A gallon of water weighs 8.34 pounds.
- A cubic foot of water contains 7.48 gallons of water.
- It takes 208.5 million gallons of water to cover one square mile with one foot of water.
- One inch of rain per square mile yields 17.4 million gallons of water.

General Facts (continued):

- Water freezes at 32 degrees F, 0 degrees C and vaporizes at 212 degrees F, 100 degrees C.
- A birch tree gives off 70 gallons of water a day in evaporation.
- An acre of corn gives off 4,000 gallons of water per day in evaporation.
- The human body is 66% water.
- A chicken is 75% water.
- An ear of corn, a pineapple and an earthworm are 80% water.
- A tomato is 95% water.

Water Use Facts:

- An individual uses about 50 gallons of water a day (**national average**).
- Since 1900 individual water use has increased approximately 900 percent.
- It takes the following amounts of water to produce a single serving of these food items: Lettuce (6 gallons); Chicken (408 gallons); French Fries (6 gallons); Almonds (12 gallons); Rice (36 gallons); Watermelon (100 gallons); Hamburger (1,303 gallons); Steak (2,607 gallons); Tomatoes (3 gallons); and Milk (65 gallons).
- A faucet dripping at one drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water per year.
- Installing a low flow showerhead can save up to 10,000 gallons of water a year.
- A family of four uses, on average, 200 gallons of water per day (**national average**).
- A leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water per day. An average of 20% of toilets leak.
- Toilets can account for almost 30% of all indoor water use, more than any other fixture or appliance.
- A conventional toilet uses 3.5 gallons of water per flush. A low flow toilet uses 1.6 gallons of water per flush.

Water Use Facts (continued):

- Replacing an old toilet with a new model can save the typical household 7,900 to 21,700 gallons of water per year.
- Installing high efficiency plumbing fixtures and appliances can help a typical family of four reduce indoor water use by one-third, save about \$95 per year on its water and sewer bill and cut energy use by as much as six percent.
- Currently about eight percent of U.S. energy demand is used to treat, pump and heat water.
- Water heating accounts for 19 percent of home energy use.
- If 20 percent of U.S. homes used high efficiency clothes washers, national energy savings could be 285 billion BTUs per day – enough to supply the needs of over one million homes.
- On average, you use 2 gallons of water to brush your teeth.
- It takes 2,072 gallons of water to make four new tires.
- It takes a total 39,090 gallons of water to manufacture a new car including tires.
- A person should consume 2.5 quarts of water a day from all sources (water, food, etc.) to maintain health.
- The first water pipes in the U. S. were made of fire charred or bored logs.
- An automatic dishwasher uses between 8 – 12 gallons of water per load.
- About 20 gallons of water is used to hand wash dishes.
- The average residence uses about 107,000 gallons of water a year.
- An individual pays about 27 cents a day for drinking water (national average).
- If all community water systems in the U.S. had to be replaced, it would cost in excess of \$175 billion dollars.
- It costs over \$3.5 billion dollars to operate the water systems throughout the country annually.

Water Use Facts (continued):

- It takes 9.3 gallons of water to process one can of fruit or vegetables.
- It takes 1,500 gallons of water to process one barrel of beer.
- It takes 5.4 gallons of water to make one board foot of lumber.
- It takes 24 gallons of water to make one pound of plastic.
- It takes 217,000 gallons of water per acre to irrigate sweet corn in a normal growing season.
- Up to 90% of water used to sprinkle lawns can be lost through evaporation from soil and plants.
- Approximately two-thirds of residential interior water use is for toilet flushing and bathing. The use of water-saving toilets, showerheads, and faucet aerators can cut this usage in half.
- A garden hose discharges up to 6.5 gallons of water per minute under standard household water pressure.
- A top-loading clothes washer uses between 40 and 55 gallons of water per load. Front-loading models reduce water usage by about 40%.
- It takes 620 gallons of water to apply an inch of water to 1,000 square feet of lawn.
- About 17 million households in the U. S. use private wells for their water supply.
- Approximately one million miles of pipeline and aqueducts are in the U. S. and Canada; enough to circle the earth 40 times.
- There are 58,900 community public water supply systems in the U. S. They process 34 billion gallons of water a day.

Susquehanna Basin Water Use Facts:

- Per capita domestic water use in the basin is about 62 gallons per day.
- A family of four in the basin uses, on average, 248 gallons of water per day.
- Per capita total water use in the basin averages 1,183 gallons per day (total water use divided by population).
- Susquehanna River flows at Harrisburg, Pa have varied from as high as 720,000 mgd to a low of 1,250 mgd.
- Between 1970 and 1990 consumptive water use in the basin grew from about 275 mgd to about 450 mgd. Projections indicate that by 2020 there will be additional growth to approximately 700 mgd.
- Pennsylvanians use 14.3 billion gallons of water every day, 13.7 billion gallons are returned to the environment.
- February 2002 was the driest February ever recorded in Harrisburg.
- The three-month period from December 2001 to February 2002 were the third driest recorded for the basin.
- There are 250 golf courses in the Susquehanna River Basin consuming an average of 50 mgd during the irrigation season.

